US, Mexico, and Canada Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Share Information

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MOU also Supports Launch of NIEM Pilot Projects

Last week, Kshemendra Paul, Information Sharing Environment Program Manager, and I traveled to Mexico City with other senior federal IT officials to discuss how information sharing among the U.S., Mexican, and Canadian governments could be enhanced. Two specific projects were agreed to as the initial collaborative initiatives under a trilateral [Memorandum of Understanding](#) [1] signed at a televised ceremony by the Mexican Vice Minister for Public Administration, the Canadian Government?s Chief Information Officer, and myself.

North America Day

Our agreement came at the culmination of North America Day talks with the CIOs of Mexico and Canada and their senior government colleagues. The annual North America Day talks have been sponsored by my office in the U.S. General Services Administration since 2000.

While this year?s discussions included an overview of several IT-related activities in each country, the importance of information sharing, chiefly in the areas of public health and public safety, took center stage.

Pilot Projects and NIEM

Perhaps most interesting, the three countries agreed to undertake one or more trilateral pilot projects that could serve as a prototype for international information sharing, addressing practical problems confronting governments on this continent. We agreed to explore adopting [NIEM](#) [2]?an XML-based framework designed to connect communities who need to exchange critical information to meet mission needs?as a key enabler for data sharing. Workgroups are being established to recommend ways we can cooperate on three potential pilot projects: ISE?s [Suspicious Activity Reporting](#) [3], sharing stolen vehicle information, and bio-surveillance.

We will meet again at the [NIEM training event in Philadelphia August 23-25](#) [4], where we expect to discuss the workgroup recommendations and formally launch some international information-sharing pilot projects.

International Information Sharing

As Carlos Viniegra, the Mexican CIO, put it, we hope to become ?the go-to guys for international information sharing.? He echoed Mexican Minister for Public Administration Salvador Vega Casillas, who said that this is, ?a great example of how it is possible to interact for the benefit of the citizens of the world.?

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